

HAYES, JULIE CANDLER (2009): *Translation, Subjectivity and Culture in France and England, 1600-1800*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 321 p.

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more precise, it demonstrates the way in which all *Renaissances*, western and non-western, have to be reexamined in their sometimes contradictory appeal to classical sources as an instrument of modernization.

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No need to be a specialist of the Early Modern or Classical period in France and England to appreciate or profit from this study. By reading the writings of translators during this two-century span – on both sides of the Channel – Hayes unearths and analyzes a huge body of literature on translation and shows how the theme of translation is itself an *intersection* of crucial questions in the history of ideas.

This is a remarkably ambitious study, the fruit of long years of rigorous and patient research. The material which is explored is vast – two centuries of writing on translation in both France and England. A basic corpus of some 450-500 works include translators' prefaces but also polemical writings, treatises, pedagogical manuals and other documents from the end of the sixteenth century through the 1790s. The book broadly follows the evolution of writing exclusively concerned with classical references to the emergence of the modern idea of *literature*. Hayes engages with the texts as historical documents, products of the intellectual debates of the day, but does not shy away from engaging with them on contemporary terrain. And indeed the study is animated by the ideas of Lévinas, Nancy and Derrida, thinkers who invoke the philosophical dimensions of otherness – the modes of *unsettling*, of *withness*, of exposure, that are raised by translation.

The first two chapters offer a broad survey of seventeenth-century translators' reflections in France and Britain – first focusing on d'Ablancourt and the Jansenist translators at Port-Royal, and the more political reflections in Britain chiefly raised by those who had been in exile in France during the Civil War. Separate chapters are devoted to John Dryden and to Anne Dacier, in the context of the many figures who gravitated around or were influenced by them. Rather than concentrating on the theme of national identity, Hayes focuses rather on the ways in which attention to language grew through issues of translation in chapters on women translators and on the translation of modern languages.

What needs to be emphasized is the thorough but light-handed treatment which Hayes gives to her vast corpus of materials. Following on Glyn Norton's important study of translation in Renaissance France (1984), and the now classic work of Luce Guillemin for the xvith century in France (1988) Hayes reveals the complexities of a discourse which has been either dismissed as ethnocentric (Venuti) or reduced to formulaic cliché (Cary). Two themes are especially important. The first is the relation to the past. We habitually credit the nineteenth century with the dawning of historical consciousness, says Hayes, but the modalities of that discourse are already present in the xviiith. Questioning of the classics and of their place in the modern world form the basis of an ongoing discussion that cannot be reduced to a single position, and indeed Hayes shows that discourse on translation plays a part in the expansion of a space for debate and critique that becomes the Enlightenment. The second and perhaps most important theme is that of the materiality of language. A recurring thread of analysis points to the "emotive, expressive, nonvehicular dimension of language, a form of linguistic embodiment of eloquence, transubstantiation, *genie* [...]" (p. 250) during this entire period. Because translation deconstructs and reconstructs the world, it highlights the artificiality of language, and discussion of translation contributes to the many polemics around word order, usage, clarity and language difference that animated this long period. Because the intent of the book is to analyze discourse on translation rather than the translations themselves, there is no sustained engagement with works such as Roger Zuber's landmark *Les Belles infidèles et la formation du goût classique* (1995). And so what is revealed is rather the *fact* of sustained engagement with the theme of translation rather than any single characterization of the translations themselves.

This is a book of first-rate scholarship, embracing a period broad enough to show major patterns of change and yet careful in its readings of individual texts. Thoughtful and perceptive, gracefully written, it sets high standards for historical translation studies. The elegance of the content is announced by its marvelously evocative jacket cover, the *Still Life with Books, Mirrors and Lenses* by Ephraim Rubenstein, which – with the doubling of its jumble of text and prisms – is one of the most effective images of translation I have seen.

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REFERENCE

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